

CHEAP REPOSITORY.

SUNDAY READING.

Bear ye one another's Burthens;
OR, THE

VALLEY OF TEARS:



Sold by J. MARSHALL,
Printer to the CHEAP REPOSITORY for Moral and Religious
Tracts; No. 17, Queen-Street, Cheap-side, and
No. 14, Aldermay Church-Yard, and R. WHITE, Pic-
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Bear ye one another's Burthens.

ONCE upon a time methought I set out upon a long journey, and the place through which I travelled appeared to be a dark Valley which was called the Valley of Tears. It had obtained this name not only on account of the many sorrowful adventures which poor passengers commonly meet with in their journey through it; but also because most of these Travellers entered it weeping and crying, and left it in very great pain and anguish. This vast valley was full of people of all colours, ages, sizes, and descriptions. But whether white or black, or tawney, all were travelling the same road; or rather they were taking different little paths which all led to the same common end.

Now, it was remarkable that notwithstanding the different complexions, ages, and tempers of this vast variety of people, yet all resembled each other in this one respect, that each had a burthen on his back which he was destined to carry through the toil and heat of the day, until he should arrive by a longer or shorter course at his journey's end. These burthens would in general have made the pilgrimage quite intolerable, had not the Lord of the Valley, out of his great compassion for these poor Pilgrims, provided among other things, the following means for their relief.

In their full view over the entrance of the Valley, there were written in great letters the following words,

Bear ye one another's Burthens.

Now, I saw in my vision that many of the Travellers hurried on without stopping to read this instruction, and others, though they had once read it, yet paid little or no attention to it. A third sort thought it very good advice for other people, but very seldom applied it to themselves. In short I saw that too many of those people were of opinion that they had burthens enough of their own, and that there was therefore no occasion to take upon them those of others; so each tried to make his own load as light, and his own journey as pleasant as he could, without so much as once casting a thought on a poor over-loaded neighbour. Here however I have to make a rather singular remark, by which I shall plainly shew the folly of these selfish people. It was so ordered and contrived by the Lord of this valley, that if any one stretched out his hand to lighten a neighbour's burthen, in fact he never failed to find that he at that moment also lightened his own. Besides, the obligation to help each other, and the benefit of doing so were mutual. If a man helped his neighbour it commonly happened that some other neighbour came by and by and helped him in his turn; for there was no such thing as what we call *independence* in the whole Valley. Not one of all these Travellers, however stout and strong, could move on comfortably without assistance, for so the Lord of the Valley, whose laws were all of them kind and good, had expressly ordained.

I stood still to watch the progress of these poor way-faring people, who moved slowly on, like so many Ticket-porters, with burthens of various

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kinds on their backs; of which some were heavier, and some were lighter, but from a burthen of one kind or other, not one Traveller was entirely free.

The Widow.

A forrowful Widow, oppressed with the burthen of grief for the loss of an affectionate husband, would have been bowed down by her heavy load, had not the surviving children with great alacrity stepped forward and supported her. Their kindness after a while, so much lightened the load which threatened at first to be intolerable, that she even went on her way with chearfulness.

The Husband.

I next saw a poor old man tottering under a burthen so heavy, that I expected him every moment to sink under it. I peeped into his pack, and saw it was made up of many sad articles; there was poverty, oppression, sickness, debt, and what made by far the heaviest part, undutiful children. I was wondering how it was that he got on even so well as he did, till I spied his wife, a kind, meek, Christian woman, who was doing her utmost to assist him. She quietly got behind, gently laid her shoulder to the burthen, and carried a much larger proportion of it than appeared to me when I was at a distance. She not only sustained him by her strength, but cheered him by her counsels. "She told him that through much tribulation we must enter into rest, that he that overcometh shall inherit all things." In short, she supported his fainting spirit, that he was enabled to "run with patience the race that was set before him."

The kind Neighbour.

An infirm blind woman was creeping forward with a very heavy burthen, in which were packed sickness and want, with numberless other of those raw materials, out of which human misery is worked up. She was so weak that she could not have got on at all, had it not been for the kind assistance of another woman almost as poor as herself; who, though she had no light burthen of her own, cheerfully lent an helping hand to a fellow traveller who was still more heavily laden. This friend had indeed little or nothing to give, but the very voice of kindness is soothing to the weary. And I remarked in many other cases, that it was not so much the degree of the help afforded, as the manner of helping that lightened the burthens. Some had a coarse, rough clumsy way of assisting a neighbour, which, though in fact it might be of real use, yet seemed, by galling the Travellers, to add to the load it was intended to lighten; while I observed in others that so cheap a kindness as a mild word, or even an affectionate look made a poor burthened wretch move on cheerily. The bare feeling that some human being cared for him, seemed to lighten the load. But to return to this kind neighbour. She had a little old book in her hand, the covers of which were worn out by much use. When she saw the blind woman ready to faint, she would read her a few words out of this book, such as the following—"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." "For our light affliction, which is but

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for a moment, worketh out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

The Clergyman.

A pious Minister, sinking under the weight of a distressed parish, whose worldly wants he was totally unable to bear, was suddenly relieved by a good widow, who came up and took all the sick and hungry on her own shoulders. The burthen of the parish thus divided became tolerable. The Minister, being no longer bowed down by the temporal distresses of his people, applied himself chearfully to his own part of the weight. And it was pleasant to see how those two persons, neither of them very strong, or rich, or healthy, by thus kindly uniting together, were enabled to bear the weight of a whole parish; though singly, either of them must have sunk under the attempt. And I remember one great grief I felt during my whole journey was, that I did not see more of this union and concurring kindness, by which all the burthens might have been so easily divided. It troubled me to observe, that of all the laws of the Valley there was not one more frequently broken than the law of kindness.

The Negroes.

I now spied a swarm of poor black men, women, and children, a multitude which no man could number; these groaned, and toiled, and sweated, and bled under far heavier loads than I had yet seen. But for a while no man helped them; at length a few White travellers were touched with the sorrowful sighing of those millions, and very heartily did they put their hands to the burthens; but

their number was not quite equal to the work they had undertaken. I perceived, however, that they never lost sight of those poor heavy-laden wretches; and as the number of these generous helpers encreased, I felt a comfortable hope, that before all the blacks got out of the Valley, the whites would fairly divide the burthen, and the loads would be effectually lightened.

Among the travellers, I had occasion to remark, that those who most kicked and struggled under their burthens, only made them so much the heavier; for their shoulders became extremely galled by those vain struggles. The load, if borne patiently, would in the end have turned even to the advantage of the bearers (for so the Lord of the Valley had kindly decreed) but as to these grumblers they had all the smart and none of the benefit. But the thing which made all these burthens seem so very heavy was, that in every one without exception, there was a certain *inner paquet*, which most of the Travellers took pains to conceal, and carefully wrap up; and while they were forward enough to complain of the other part of their burthens, few said a word about this; though in truth it was the pressing weight of this *secret paquet* which served to render the general burthen so intolerable. In spite of all their caution, I contrived to get a peep at it, I found in each that this paquet had the same label; the word SIN was written on all as a general title, and in ink so black that they could not wash it out. I observed that most of them took no small pains to hide the writing; but I was surprized to see that they did not try to get rid of the load but the label. If any kind friend who assisted these people in bearing their burthens,

did but so much as hint at the *secret paquet*, or advise them to get rid of it, they took fire at once, and commonly denied they had any such article in their portmanteau; and it was those whole *secret paquet* swelled to the most enormous size, who most stoutly denied they had any.

I saw with pleasure, however, that some who had long laboured heartily to get rid of this inward *paquet* at length found it much diminished, and the more this *paquet* shrunk in size, the lighter was the other part of their burthens also.

Then, methought, all at once, I heard a voice as it had been the voice of an angel, crying out and saying, "Ye unhappy Pilgrims, why are ye troubled about the burthen which ye are doomed to bear through this Valley of Tears? Know ye not that as soon as ye shall have escaped out of this Valley, the whole burthen shall drop off, provided ye neglect not to remove that inward weight of Sin which principally oppresses you? Study then the whole Will of the Lord of this Valley. Learn from him how this heavy part of your burthens may now be lessened, and how at last it shall be removed for ever. Be comforted. Faith and Hope may cheer you even in this Valley. The passage, though it seems long to weary Travellers, is comparatively short; for beyond it there is a Land of everlasting Rest, where ye shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more, where ye shall be led by living fountains of waters, and all tears shall be wiped away from your eyes."

Z.

THE END.

